

Introduction/general guidance Economics Teacher Support Material

Requirements

Economics students at SL and HL produce a portfolio of three commentaries based on articles from published news media. Each article must be based on a different section of the syllabus.

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- International economics
- Development economics

Rubric requirements

The following requirements are necessary for the production of the commentaries. If these requirements are not met students will lose marks under criterion F: rubric requirements.

1. Word limit

Students must produce a portfolio of three commentaries. Each commentary must not exceed 750 words.

Note: Moderators will not read beyond 750 words for each commentary.

The following are not included in the word count.

- Acknowledgments
- Contents page
- Diagrams
- Labels—of 5 words or fewer
- Headings on diagrams—of 10 words or fewer
- Tables of statistical data
- Equations, formulae and calculations
- Citations (which, if used, must be in the body of the commentary)
- References (which, if used, must be in the footnotes/endnotes)

Please note that footnotes/endnotes may be used for references only. Definitions of economic terms and quotations, if used, must be in the body of the work and are included in the word count. Please note that a citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of the commentary, which is then linked to the full reference in the footnotes/endnotes.

2. Articles

Each article must be based on a different section of the syllabus.

3. Sources

Students must use a different source for each commentary.

4. Contemporary articles

Students need to look for articles relating to current events and these must be published no earlier than one year before the writing of the commentary.

5. Contents

Each portfolio must contain:

- a summary portfolio coversheet
- a commentary coversheet for each commentary
- three commentaries, accompanied in each case by the relevant article.

How to choose an extract

The nature of articles

The choice of an appropriate article is the most crucial aspect of writing a successful commentary. The article used does not have to be purely economic, as the application of economic theories and concepts can be observed in many areas. Articles without any obvious economics are sometimes the most effective, allowing students to introduce economic analysis where it is not immediately apparent.

Articles that include substantial economic analysis, such as in *The Economist*, while allowable as a source, may leave little opportunity for further analysis.

Suitable articles

Articles must be chosen from the news media: newspapers, magazines or the internet. Students need to look for articles relating to current events, and these must be published no earlier than one year before the writing of the commentary.

The World Wide Web is a good source of articles. However, news media websites are the only appropriate sources. The use of blogs is not allowed for internal assessment unless these are associated with recognized news organizations. Students must take care to record correctly the actual date the article was published, not just when it was posted on the internet.

Graphic sources (for example, pictures, cartoons and advertisements) are not to be used as source articles: these do not qualify as articles for the purpose of this internal assessment.

Students must take care not to choose articles where there is little room for their own analysis and

evaluation.

Time period of articles

It is helpful to encourage students to collect articles for their commentaries throughout the course. However, commentaries must be written within a year of the published date of the article.

Length of articles

Shorter articles are often a good choice as they tend to be focused on just one or two economic theories/concepts. A rough guide is approximately one full side of A4/letter-size paper (in font 10–12 with normal line spacing) and no longer than two sides of A4/letter-size paper. It is important to note that moderators (external examiners) will not read beyond two sides of text.

Articles that are too short will not usually provide enough interesting issues for students to analyse.

If students wish to use a long article, they must include the original article in its entirety, with the selected part(s) highlighted. This helps students to stay focused. Students must remember that the teacher and moderator will only read the highlighted section(s) and it is crucial, therefore, to highlight **all** the relevant sections in the commentary.

Language of articles

In most cases the article chosen will be in the same language as the commentary. If an article in another language is used, the student must provide an accurate translation of the whole article. Students must also include the original article in their portfolio.

If students wish to use a long article, the selected part(s) must be highlighted, both on the translation and the original. (See “Length of articles”.)

Individual work on the articles and commentaries

Students must select their own articles to analyse. The teacher must not give the articles to the class or even a single extract to a group of students. It can happen that students select the same articles by chance. This is acceptable, provided the teacher is confident that each of the students involved came up with the article independently. However, the teacher may require students to find alternative articles.

The production of the commentary must also be each student’s individual work and must not be prepared collaboratively with any other members of the class. Commentaries must not be based on any articles used for class activities.

For fuller information see “Responsibilities of the teacher” and “Responsibilities of the student” in this support material.